

Message Text

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10
ACTION SS-30

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P 071012Z DEC 73
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2385
INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 10582

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY

DEPT PASS CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PK, AF
SUBJECT: PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS

REF: KABUL 8311

1. WHILE WE MUST, OF COURSE, AWAIT FURTHER VERIFICATION BY AMBASSADOR ELIOT IN KABUL, I AM EXTREMELY CONCERNED BY THE WORD THAT SOMEWHAT OVER 850 SOVIET TANKS MAY BE HEADED FOR AFGHANISTAN AS TENTATIVELY REPORTED IN KABUL 8311. WHILE I AGREE THAT AFGHANISTANS COULD NOT QUICKLY MAN AND EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE THIS AMOUNT OF ARMAMENT, I WOULD EXPECT AN IMMEDIATE AND EXTREME REACTION ON THE PART OF BHUTTO, AND INDEED THE SHAH OF IRAN, WHEN AND IF THEY GET THE WORD. A MOVE OF THIS MAGNITUDE WOULD AT THE VERY LEAST LEAD TO EXTREME SENSITIVITY IN THE WHOLE UNDER-BELLY OF RUSSIA, EXTENDING AT A MINIMUM FROM IRAN TO INDIA. IF THIS REPORT TURNS OUT TO BE TRUE, I SUGGEST YOU HAVE AN ITEM FOR SOVIET CONSULATIONS HIGH
SECRET

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ON YOUR AGENDA, EVEN IF IT CAN ACCOMPLISH NO OTHER PURPOSE THAN TO TRY TO ASCERTAIN JUST HOW FAR DOWN THIS ROAD THEY PLAN TO GO.

2. ONE OF MY GREATEST HOPES IN COMING HERE WAS TO FACILITATE AS I COULD THE SIMLA ATMOSPHERE WITH INDIA. THIS IS A STRONG ARGUMENT FOR OUR PRESENT ARMS POLICY IN THE SUB-CONTINENT AS DIFFICULT AS I KNOW THAT THAT WILL MAKE LIFE HERE. I HAVE IN FACT SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME DECIDING HOW BEST TO TRY TO PLACATE BHUTTO ON THIS SUBJECT. OUR PRESENT ARMS POLICY IS OF COURSE AS IT IS SOLELY BECAUSE OF INDIA, AND THE HOPE THAT IN THE LONG RUN SECURITY CAN BEST BE ACCOMPLISHED BY IMPROVED INDIA-PAK RELATIONS. BUT IF THIS TENTATIVE KABUL REPORT IS VERIFIED, AND AT THE WORST OTHER SUPPORTING ARMAMENT IS TO FOLLOW, IT MAY WELL TURN OUT THAT THIS POLICY WOULD BECOME UNTENABLE, AT LEAST IF WE EXPECT AND HOPE TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS HERE IN PAKISTAN. IF THE SOVIETS ARE INDEED WILLING TO STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT DAOUD TO THIS EXTENT, WITH HIS PUBLICLY EXPRESSED DESIGNS RE PAKISTAN TERRITORY, WE MIGHT RELUCTANTLY CONCLUDE THAT A COMPLETE REVIEW OF OUR POLICY IN THIS ENTIRE AREA WOULD BE IN ORDER.

3. I TEND TO AGREE WITH EMBASSY KABUL THAT DAOUD IS PROBABLY THINKING OF HISTORY AND LONG-RANGE PLANS RATHER THAN IMMEDIATE ACTION. ALSO, I WOULD AGREE THAT AFGHANISTAN, EVEN WITH SUCH A SUPPLEMENT OF ARMS, WOULD NOT HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF TACKLING PAKISTAN AT AN EARLY DATE, ALTHOUGH THEIR TANK FORCE WOULD APPROACH PARITY WITH THAT OF THE PAKS TOO CLOSELY FOR COMFORT. I AM NOT, HOWEVER AT ALL SURE THAT PAKISTAN, AND POSSIBLY IRAN, WOULD HAVE SO COMPLACENT A VIEW IF AND WHEN THEY RECEIVE THEIR OWN INTELLIGENCE REPORT ON THIS POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT. SUCH A MOVE AS THIS WOULD FIT SO COMPLETELY INTO VIEWS OFTEN EXPRESSED TO US BY BOTH BHUTTO AND THE SHAH AS TO SOVIET LONG RANGE INTENTIONS (WHICH INVOLVE AFGHANISTAN) IN THIS AREA, THAT IT WOULD BE WELL NIGH IMPOSSIBLE TO CONVINCINGLY ATTEMPT TO TALK THEM DOWN.
BYROADE

SECRET

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